

WIMBLEDON MUSCLE BEATS WANDERERS IN TORRID GAME

By Argus.

Wimbledon 2,
Wycombe 1

DESPERATE tooth-and-claw football by the Isthmian League champions kept the points in Wimbledon on Saturday after a game that both clubs will want quickly to forget. What should have been a soccer classic declined into a tough hurly-burly as the Dons scrambled to survive a Wycombe barrage in the last 20 minutes.

Wimbledon hung on somehow but the muscle boys of Plough-lane can sift precious little glory from this victory. The only true football in a torrid, tantalising encounter came from Wycombe Wanderers.

The big boot and the big tackle, somewhat questionable tactics, saved the Dons. If one other Wycombe forward besides Dennis Atkins had packed a wallop in his football boots, the Wanderers would certainly have taken a point.

SMOOTH

Satin-smooth Wycombe exposed the Wimbledon defence as a decidedly shaky outfit in the first and final phases of the game when goalkeeper Phil Ledger was the busiest man around Plough-lane.

In between-times the Wanderers were hustled out of their stride by a dash-and-hurry team who made up in beef what they lacked in method. This was rough cider after a liqueur.

The game could have been all over bar the shouting in the first quarter-of-an-hour when Wycombe swarmed over the opposition. A furious shot from Atkins made Ledger go "oof" as he punched the ball; James went astray with two clear chances; Trott sent a first-timer just wide, and then Bates, slipping Ardrey with the greatest of ease, beat Ledger all ends up with a grasscutter which rolled past a goalpost.

Eddie Reynolds, fleet of foot than he used to be, was a persistent menace to Wycombe's goal. Brown had to make daring saves as the big fellow thundered away and Fisher, with cool logic, twice headed deliberately over his own crossbar.

BEST GOAL

In the 35th minute Reynolds scored the best goal of his career and nearly crippled himself in the process. He hurtled through the air to head home Burton's centre and was stretcher-borne from the field nursing a sprained ankle.

Within seconds Atkins had put the Wanderers back on terms after running through on his own.

The Wanderers' forwards, minus the "sizzle" in front of goal they had shown in the Pegasus match, had plenty of ideas, Messrs. Atkins, Bates and Free contributing liberally.

Atkins, target of a few moronic barrackers, was as strong and determined as ever, the liveliest and most dangerous of the visiting attackers.

NO CLINCHES

There were no fireworks from Paul Bates on Saturday. He gave a controlled, cultured exhibition of inside forward play but was blotted out for a long time in the middle stages of the game and could never explode a match-clinching shot.

Gerald Free had a rare honours-even duel with full back John Martin, but Peter James and Cliff Trott seemed short of speed in a fantastically quick game. James, particularly, toiling in the grip of Roy Law, one of the best young amateur pivots.

The Wanderers' defence gave visiting fans palpitations in the first half—especially when Irish man-mountain Eddie Reynolds was outclimbing John Fisher to almost every cross in the penalty area—but was commendably solid after half-time.

FIRST CLASS

Full marks to Jimmy Moring for a first-class display, to highly-proficient Ken Brown, and to Ron Fryer for contributing more than his share of soccer brainwork.

Although Reynolds came back for the second half he was practically a passenger—but not quite. As both teams battled away for the winner it was Reynolds who headed down a cross which resulted in Geoff Hamm stabbing home a close range decided after Moring had saved on the line.

TOOK CHARGE

As the Wanderers took charge the entire Wimbledon defence concentrated like a blue ink stain in the Dons' half of the ground. Roy Law, in particular, had a go in an effort to crack the iron curtain but the nearest they came to scoring was when James, with an open goal mesmerising him, was whipped down by Law in a sliding tackle.

Equally frustrating was the last kick-of-the-match sensation when a Trott shot spun along the goal-line with Wimbledon groping.